

Children's home inspection – Full

Inspection date	18 October 2016
Unique reference number	SC483662
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	CareTech Community Services
Registered provider address	CareTech Community Services Ltd Metropolitan House 3 Darkes Lane Potters Bar Hertfordshire EN6 1AG

Responsible individual	Mark O'Donnell
Registered manager	Rebecca Quinn
Inspector	Michelle Spruce

Inspection date	18 October 2016
Previous inspection judgement	Requires improvement
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC483662

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Children and young people have positive experiences during their short break. More children and young people are accessing the service as a result of its success.
- Children and young people have opportunities to experience activities that they might not access without the short break.
- Children and young people make progress in developing small steps towards independence.
- Children and young people's achievements are celebrated and recognised. Praise and rewards enhance their self-esteem.
- Children and young people are safe and protected from harm. High staffing levels provide good supervision to meet the individual needs of children and young people.
- Children and young people do not go missing from care. Careful risk management keeps them safe.
- There is minimal use of physical intervention. It is only used as a last resort.
- The leadership and management are strong. The manager and staff are dedicated and passionate about the care they provide.
- Staff are trained and supervised well. Children and young people receive good-quality care.
- There is one area that needs improvement. This is in relation to the complaints procedures.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation:

- Ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies and procedures on record keeping. In particular, this is in relation to the complaints procedure and informing in writing of the outcome. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This short-break service provides care and accommodation for up to six children and young people with learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities. The service is privately owned and forms part of a large social care organisation.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/07/2015	Full	Requires improvement

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Children and young people enjoy and look forward to their short break. They form healthy relationships with staff and make new friends. A young person said, 'I like the staff. They are my friends.' Some children and young people already know each other from school. A staff member said, 'They are really well matched. Some go to the same schools and holiday clubs and have already established friendships. They are making new friends. They all tend to sit together and share toys.' The staff know that children and young people are enjoying their stay through close observations of their behaviour and vocal tone and voice. A member of staff said, 'Relationships are great, happy and bubbly. You can tell by their body language, expressions or voice. It's like one big family here.' Children and young people are involved in making decisions when they have a short break. Staff help and encourage them to make choices by using their preferred communication style. This makes sure that children and young people have their say and input into how they wish their short stay to be managed. A staff member responded to a survey and said, 'It's very important that each child is involved in the decision-making about the things that are going on in their lives. This empowers them to develop and gain confidence and self-esteem.' The complex health needs of children and young people are met on a daily basis. Staff liaise well with parents/carers before children and young people come to stay, to note any specific changes to medication or mobility needs. This makes sure that children and young people remain in good health while on their short break. A community nurse commented in a survey: 'There is a strong child-centred approach and all of the key workers have good knowledge of the children.' Children and young people make progress in managing their personal hygiene. A nurse said: 'Staff appear to follow the care plan and they have made great progress with developing one young man to increase his independence with regard to his personal hygiene.' Staff promote education attendance and support children and young people with their homework. They praise their achievements and celebrate success. The staff reflect the achievements of children and young people by taking photos. They capture and reflect the special moments that are important in the lives of children and young people. This provides everyone with a snapshot of their journey during their short break. Children and young people have positive experiences during their short break. More children and young people are accessing the service as a result of its success.	

Parents' comments about the service are positive. They feel safe leaving their children and feel that the service is a great benefit to the child and the family. A parent said, 'Really pleased with the service. It's great for his social well-being.' Another parent said, 'He had tea visits before he started using the service. He thought it was great. He likes it here. Staff are skilled and trained well. I am happy with the quality of care.'

Children and young people experience activities that they might not access without the short break. This widens their social contact, improves their physical and emotional well-being and increases their confidence.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Children and young people are safe in the home. Staff provide one-to-one support that makes sure that they are supervised at all times. Children and young people feel safe and enjoy their time at the home. They settle well on arrival. This shows that they are content to have their stay. Staff are clear about how to report safeguarding concerns, and they receive appropriate training. This helps them to keep children and young people safe. Medication arrangements are safe. Controlled drugs are kept in a double-locked cabinet, and two staff members are available to administer and record medication. The arrangements for receiving medication from parents is safe. The manager and staff check prior to arrival any changes to prescribed medication and ensure that it is in date before administering it. This protects children and young people who require medication. Children and young people who require medication or food via invasive techniques are supported by trained staff. Consents are agreed following staff training. This makes sure that children and young people receive the correct care when needing to be fed or have medication through a gastrostomy feeding tube. Staff are safely recruited. The vetting process makes sure that all candidates are suitable. Clearance checks are completed before starting work. This protects against unsuitable candidates having access to children and young people. Young people do not go missing from care. The high levels of supervision keep children and young people supervised and monitored at all times. This keeps them safe.	

The use of physical intervention is only as a last resort by trained staff. Since the last full inspection in July 2015 there has been one incident when the use of a measure was necessary. Staff understand how to de-escalate behaviour that is challenging. This reduces the need for physical intervention. As a result, young people rarely have to be restrained.

There are no signs of bullying in the home. The children and young people have good relationships with each other. Staff are always on hand to pick up on any behaviour that may lean towards potential bullying and address it accordingly. This helps children and young people to enjoy their short break.

The staff constantly praise and reward children and young people for their achievements. They do not use sanctions. The walls of the home are full of photographs that show the enjoyable experiences that they have. No matter how small an achievement is, staff praise their efforts verbally. This encourages positive behaviour and makes children and young people happy and proud.

Allegations and complaints are handled well. The manager reports and addresses any safeguarding issues without delay. The outcome of one complaint has not been formally provided in writing in line with the home's policy and procedures.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The service benefits from a registered manager who is suitably qualified and has a level 5 diploma in the management and care of children and young people. A dedicated and committed staff team supports her. The staff team members hold suitable qualifications in caring for children and young people. Staff who are undertaking their level 3 diploma are expected to complete within the regulatory timescales. The team works effectively and efficiently. Children and young people receive good-quality care. Regular feedback about the service is received and acted on. The manager and the team know that they improve the lives of children and young people, because they monitor their success on a daily basis. This helps them to identify what is good and what needs to be improved. The manager said, 'We get feedback from parents in forum meetings. We request updates from parents about the care we provide. We know we are meeting our aims and objectives because the service continues to grow and young people continue to have positive experiences.' The team works in excellent partnership with parents, teachers and health professionals. This keeps the channels of communication open between parents, young people and the short-break service.	

The manager provides good training, supervision and appraisal for her staff team. This keeps the staff up to date with changes to legislation, and broadens their skill and knowledge. Staff members feel valued and able to develop personally from the good management support. A staff member said, 'Appraisals help me to do even better at my job. I enjoy my job. It makes me happy when I get appraisals from my senior. It makes me more confident. I work even harder the next time.' A staff member commented about the training provided: 'I think the training here is brilliant.'

The manager monitors the quality of the home and provides a bi-annual report to Ofsted. An independent visitor undertakes further monitoring. This keeps the manager informed about how well the service is performing. As a result, any action required is completed in a timely manner.

Records that are required to be held are kept up to date and stored safely. This keeps data protected.

The statement of purpose is reviewed and updated when required, and the manager and staff team are clear about the aims and objectives of the service. The manager challenges services that are not effective. For example, the manager wrote to the appropriate professionals to request up-to-date education and health care plans. This has helped the staff deliver good-quality care in line with children's plans.

The home is excellently maintained and furnished to a high standard. It provides a warm and welcoming feel to everyone who resides, works or visits. The staff take pride in their environment. As a result, children and young people want to attend the short-break service and continue to do so.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of children looked after is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or that result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference that adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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